

PORKER OF THE WEEK AWARD

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, since 1971 taxpayers have subsidized Amtrak to the tune of \$25.3 billion, yet they have not received a reliable or efficient mode of transportation in exchange for 31 years. Amtrak has not made a profit.

Almost since its inception Amtrak has hemorrhaged money in all directions, particularly on many of its routes. Of the 40-plus routes of Amtrak, only two are profitable. Its worst performing route, from Los Angeles to Orlando, loses \$347 per passenger, meaning it would be cheaper for Amtrak to keep the train on the platform and buy its passengers airline tickets. Last year, Amtrak ended the year with a record operating loss of \$1.1 billion and a \$5.8 billion backlog in maintenance and repair.

Despite receiving Federal funds totaling \$5 billion in the last 5 years, Amtrak has made no progress toward achieving self-sufficiency and is in a weaker financial condition than in 1997.

It is time to wean Amtrak from the public trough. Amtrak gets my Porker of the Week Award this week and it ought to get the Porker of the Week Award for several decades, as a matter of fact.

WORKING TOGETHER ON A BIPARTISAN BASIS

(Mr. SHERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, so much corporate malfeasance, so little time, so much to do. I join with the earlier speaker in saying that we should work together on a bipartisan basis, and indeed this House did pass a bill in April, but it passed a bill in which virtually every Democratic amendment was rejected out of hand, rejected on a partisan vote.

So we do not have a bill that requires the SEC to actually read the financial statements of the largest companies and make sure that they are not misleading or obtuse.

We do not have a requirement that audit firms have malpractice insurance or that they require their technical review partners to sign off on their audits.

What we have is a bill that is bipartisan in form only. Working together is not just working with the other body. It is working with both sides of the aisle.

Let me also take this opportunity to commend the Financial Accounting Standards Board whose slow and ineffectual action makes the House and the Senate look effective by comparison.

CONGRATULATING MARTHA DE NORFOLK

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Martha De Norfolk, a single mother in my congressional district who has worked to found and maintain the Arthrogryposis Foundation. In order to help her disabled child Bryant Amastha and other local children, Mrs. De Norfolk has dedicated her time and effort to the success of this foundation.

One in every 3,000 babies is born with arthrogryposis, which limits the motion in joints and causes severe muscle weakness. In the classic case of this disease, hands, wrists, elbows, shoulders, hips, feet and knees are affected.

Most people with this disease are of normal intelligence and are able to lead productive lives. However, if not treated through physical therapy or surgery, this disease can become fatal as the body deforms so that internal organs are unable to function properly.

With the help of the foundation that my constituent Martha De Norfolk is working to establish, children suffering with this disease will soon have financial assistance and support groups on which to depend, and local doctors will have access to education on this disease and its treatment, and that is why I congratulate her today.

CORPORATE EVILDOERS ABROAD IN THE LAND

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Florida talked about the phony reform that was passed by this House and the fact that the Senate will not take it up. Thank God for the Senate.

That was a phony reform. It was written by the securities industry. It was written to touch them with a feather duster. Now there are corporate evildoers abroad in the land, and they have stolen and diverted billions, bankrupted firms, thousands of hard-working Americans have lost their jobs, millions of seniors' savings and pensions evaporated, and even the President has noticed.

He went to Wall Street to admonish his corporate contributors not to do it again, but not to worry, Harvey Pitt, the former security firm lobbyist, has been named to head the enforcement agency, but he did not go to the President's speech because he was on vacation at the beach hobnobbing with the same corporate evildoers he is supposed to be investigating, his former clients. We do not have to worry about a thing, I guess.

WORKING TOGETHER TO STOP ACCOUNTING SCANDALS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the stock market took its sharpest dive since last fall. Some of the major indexes are lower than they have been since 1998.

The reason, Mr. Speaker, is not that the economy is not strong. GDP grew at a rate of 6.1 percent last quarter. The reason is that a handful of dishonest executives got greedy during the heady days of the nineties. They began to lie and deceive in order to make it look like their companies were making more money than they actually were. By lying, they kept their stock prices up and made themselves rich.

Even though only a few companies were involved, investor confidence has suffered severely. The President has a tough and sensible plan to punish the wrongdoers and make sure this does not happen again.

The House has already acted on parts of the President's plan. There is only one thing standing in the way of fixing the problem: Politics, Mr. Speaker. Our friends on the other side of the aisle, especially in the other body, are intent on trying to blame this President and Republicans for what happened on their President's watch.

This is not about blame, Mr. Speaker. It is about fixing a problem. Just once we ought to put politics aside and get the job done.

WE NEED A STATE DEPARTMENT THAT FIGHTS FOR OUR CITIZENS

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, my mother used to tell me where there is a will, there is a way. Last month, the Committee on Government Reform held a hearing on U.S. women and children who are being held in Saudi Arabia, and that continues to play out in the news. While the situation in Saudi Arabia obviously deserves attention, the issue of international child abduction exists in countries all over the world. Right now, and my colleagues have heard the story that I am telling about Ludwig Koons who is being held in Italy, one of our closest friends. Ludwig Koons is a young boy who has been there in Italy for 8 years being held by his mother in a pornographic compound, and the Italian authorities and our State Department did nothing essentially to help.

For years I have been working with left-behind parents who are trying to get their children back where they belong, and for years I have witnessed a State Department that does nothing tangible to help. We need a State Department that fights for United States citizens, not an idle information agency.

This issue is one that none of us can afford to ignore. Be aware, put pressure on those other countries that are not